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Silver Louis of Fifteen Sous, struck under Louis XIV., for Circulation in French America.

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(Read before the American Philosophical Society, July 21st, 1876.)

Description--Silver. LVD · XIII · D · G · [Mint-mark, Sun in splendor, the badge of Louis XIV.] FR · ET · NAV · REX · (Louis the 14th, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre.) Bust of Louis XIV., laureate, to the right, in corselet and mantle; margin serrated. *Rev.* GLORIAM · REGNI · | TVI · DICENT · ("They shall speak of the



glory of thy kingdom,") 1670. On a crowned shield, three *fleurs-de-lis* (two and one). Above the crown, a crowned A; beneath the shield, between the dot after REGNI and the dot before TVI, A (for Paris, the place of striking); margin serrated. Size 13, scale of the Philadelphia Numismatic Society, *i. e.*, thirteen-sixteenths of an inch. Condition, barely circulated.

Although there has existed among us, for the last quarter of a century, a very considerable degree of interest in the subject of our pre-revolutionary coinage, and although the taste for collecting and studying such specimens of it as can be procured has steadily increased, till the majority of the rarer and more remarkable pieces extant have found their way into the cabinets of collectors, to the great enhancement of the price of those which remain in the market, and with a corresponding whetting of the appetite to possess them on the part of antiquarians, it strangely happens that the beautiful coin represented above, demonstrably American, and suggestive of important historical remembrances as it is, has remained neglected and unsought for. No author on American Numismatics seems to have been aware of its existence until the present writer, in Vol. IV., No. 9, for January, 1870, of the American Journal of Numismatics, which he then edited, called the attention of its readers to the fact. A brief and unsatisfactory notice of it, not founded, as is confessed, on actual inspection, forthwith appeared in Sandham's "Supplement to Coins," &c., of Canada, Montreal, 1872; the main work, published in 1869, being silent on the matter. But Mr. Sylvester S. Crosby, of Boston, who has lately (1873-1875) produced the last and best work on the general subject, entitled, "The Early

Coins of America, and the Laws governing their Issue," and proves himself, on every page of it, to be a diligent and conscientious laborer, thinks himself called on to adopt an apologetic tone when mentioning this piece, and to speak of it as "not strictly included in our original plan." Yet his purpose, or "original plan" was, in his own language, "to give all the trustworthy information at" his "command, relative to such coins, or tokens, which were intended to serve as coins, that were either struck in those parts of America which now constitute the United States, or were intended for use therein;" and it cannot be controverted that this is the earliest official coin of a region embracing at least half of the States which now constitute the Union. We are not perhaps, in general, sufficiently alive to the truth that, from the Atlantic to the remote West, the beginnings of colonization were chiefly made by France. Not Canada and Louisiana, merely, formed the French America of a once far from improbable future. In an authority easy to consult, Bancroft's History of the United States, Vol. II., we find a "Map of French, English, Dutch, Swedish and Spanish possessions, or claims in the United States, in 1655." A narrow strip from the Kennebec to Cape Fear, is all that is marked as not French, to the northward of Florida. A large part of Maine, all West Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, the greater part of New York and of Pennsylvania, and from these all westward, as far as exploration had then extended, are French. Every one of the States comprehended within the area thus roughly denoted, may regard the coin in question as its earliest monetary relic.

Without, however, going back to years anterior to its date, or looking away from the broad double valley, which extends between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains, or including States of which any portion lies outside of these limits, we can easily, we think, form a list of fifteen, in each of which the collector, present and to come, must regard this "Gloriam Regni" of 1670, as its most ancient numismatic monument. The reader of history is aware that "Louisiana" was, in 1712, defined by authority as comprising all the country drained by waters emptying directly or indirectly into the Mississippi; while the schoolboy has been taught that, out of the "Louisiana purchase" of 1803, alone, have already been formed fifteen States and territories, eight of the former and seven of the latter. Since it happens that, in the article already referred to (*American Journal of Numismatics*, Vol. IV., No. 9, for January, 1870), the present writer, just two centuries after the first appearance of this coin, introduced it to American collectors as a new "Colonial," not known to them before, and proper to take the place usurped by one familiar to the numismatic fraternity under the name "Louisiana copper," or "R F," he must now again insist on the correctness of this view, and re-affirm that the GLORIAM REGNI is the earliest colonial coin of at least half the States of the Union. Of course we do not mean that it actually circulated in the whole vast region mentioned; but it may have appeared accidentally in any part thereof, and, wherever it did so appear, it was, in the

estimation of any Frenchman who might behold it, the coin of the realm which he trod.

It is, then, our oldest French "Colonial." Mr. Crosby may boldly represent it as such in his next edition. No apology will be required. Both he, indeed, and his predecessors, needed rather to defend (as he attempts to do), or, in fact, avoid altogether, the introduction of the "Sommer Islands," (or Bermuda) patterns for shilling and sixpence, in a work on the coinage of the United States, where they can have no just claim to stand.

With a few brilliant exceptions, our prominent numismatic collectors, and even authors, have not been men of much research or of a wide range of reading. They have delved with greater or less industry in a narrow field; and authorities, other than those in English, have not occurred to them. Hence works of some rarity, like Le Blanc's Treatise on the Coins of France, or of great commonness, like the New France of Charlevoix, which latter, as we shall soon proceed to show, contains most satisfactory corroboration of the American character of the coin of Louis Quatorze before us, with a tolerably ample history of it, have equally escaped their notice. As John Smith's History of Virginia, on the other hand, includes a full account of the Sommer Islands pattern, and is a familiar book, in English, they have, through a natural confusion of localities, inadvertently come to regard that coin as a United States "Colonial" one.

Moreover, this GLORIAM REGNI, or French-American piece of Fifteen Sous, is a very rare coin. I infer from the first of the two French authorities whom I have named—and I shall presently quote his exact words—that only one hundred thousand livres' worth of 15-sous pieces and 5 sous pieces, together, was struck in 1670, and none at any subsequent date. The "livre," now obsolete, was one-eightieth less in value than the present franc, and, like the franc, contained twenty sous. Personally, I know of the existence of only five specimens. I have had the good fortune to obtain two, both in very fine condition, from two different auction-sales of coins in Europe, and one of these I have now the honor of presenting to the American Philosophical Society, with an accompanying wood-cut made expressly for the illustration of this paper; a third, seemingly in a poor state of preservation, if we may judge from its heliotype likeness in Mr. Crosby's work, plate III, No. 5, is in the cabinet of that accomplished scholar and numismatist, William S. Appleton, of Boston; the fourth had, from its appearance, and the locality where I met with it, in all probability been circulated in America. It was in the collection of Mr. J. Myshrall, at Frederickton, New Brunswick, where I saw it in 1870, towards the end of the summer. It showed marks of rough treatment, and must, I think, in passing from hand to hand, have reached, from Lower Canada, the town where it came under my observation. The fifth has been shown me since I began to write this communication, by its owner, Mr. Henry Mott, at present of Brooklyn, but formerly of Montreal.

It bears slight marks of circulation, and was obtained in the latter city. Hence it too, probably, was once in actual use.

And here I have a remark to make : that it is a somewhat unreasonable, albeit almost universal, trait of collectors of coins, to strive to obtain them in a condition, if possible, uncirculated, or at least nearly approaching that state. Yet it is evident that marks of actual service, provided they have not obliterated the legend or seriously impaired the device, ought to give a heightened interest to these objects, as proving them to have been handled by the people of their time. The desire to possess a collection, which, in mechanical and artistic beauty and brilliancy, may compare favorably with others, seems, however, to transcend, with most numismatists, every other consideration ; and accordingly a coin, which may be called still-born, inasmuch as it has, by some accident, been snatched from a coin's virtual existence, which is its circulation, on the very threshold of such real life, has always commanded, and will continue to command the preference.

But it is now time to authenticate our GLORIAM REGNI, and establish, by evidence, that it is entitled to the estimation which we claim for it. In the "Historic Treatise on the Coins of France, from the commencement of the Monarchy to the present time," by Mons. Le Blanc, Paris, 1703, we read at page 388 : "In order to facilitate commerce in Canada, the King caused to be struck a hundred thousand livres' worth of Louis of 15 sous, and of 5 sous, and Doubles of pure copper. These coins were of the same value, weight, and fineness with those of France. On the silver Louis of 15 sous and 5 sous, in place of the *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*, there was *Gloriam regni tui dicent*, and on the Doubles, *Doubles de l'Amerique Françoise*." The specimen which I transmit to the Society, must therefore, as its size and intrinsic value denote, be one of those of Fifteen Sous. I am much inclined to doubt whether the Louis of five sous was really struck, since I have never seen one or heard of one as actually existing. Nor is any "Double" to be found, as far as I know, among American collectors, though the inhabitants of Lower Canada and of the French West India Islands have in all likelihood preserved some few examples. Mr. Crosby's heliotype portrait of the piece, plate III, No. 6, is as he informs us, not taken from a genuine one.

In a letter written at Quebec, Feb. 15, 1721 (Nouvelle France, Vol. III, p. 91), Charlevoix gives us the following information on our subject : Commerce in Canada was depressed by nothing perhaps more than "the frequent changes which were made there in the coins. I will give a brief account of the matter. In 1670, the West India Company, to which the King had ceded the dominion over the Islands of the French American Continent, had permission to introduce into the Islands small money to the amount of a hundred thousand francs, stamped by a particular die, with a legend which was peculiar to it. The King's edict is of the month of February, and was to the effect that these coins should be current only in the Islands. But on certain difficulties, which supervened, the Council

issued, on the 18th of November of the year 1672, a decree by which it was ordered that the money aforesaid, and all other specie, being current in France, should also be current, not only in the French Islands but also on the terra-firma of America subject to the crown, with an augmentation of one-fourth superadded; that is to say, the pieces of fifteen sous for twenty, and the others in proportion."

"The same decree ordered that all contracts, bills, accounts, purchases and payments should be made between all descriptions of persons, in money, without privilege of barter or accounting in sugar, under penalty of nullity as to transaction. And in regard to the past, it was ordained that all stipulations relating to contracts, or bills, or debts, or obligations, or rents in sugar and other provisions should be reduced into and made payable in money, at the valuation of the aforesaid coins. In execution of this decree, coin increased one-fourth in value in New France," &c., &c. Here we leave the amiable Jesuit to relate the financial mischief which ensued, and we quit the historic aspect of our theme for the æsthetic and literary.

As a work of art this coin is beautiful. It will, from that point of view, compare advantageously with any now produced in the home-mints of this country, where it was once intended to circulate. The portrait of Louis presents him as a handsome man of thirty-two, his age in 1670; the mint-mark of the sun in splendor recalls his famous motto: "*Nec pluribus impar*"—which, by the way, has a structural similarity to our own national one;—the manner of marking with a . subscript the final I in XIII is very uncommon; I know no other instance of it on a coin. The reverse offers us, as a subject of remark, first, the legend: "*Gloriam Regni tui Dicent.*" It is taken from the vulgate of the fine Psalm CXLV., entitled "David's Psalm of praise." Verses 10-13 of our translation read as follows:

10. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.
11. *They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom*, and talk of thy power;
12. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his Kingdom.
13. Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

In the application of the beginning of verse 11 to the purpose of a numismatic legend, particularly if it be considered in connection with its context, two covert references seem to me to be intended; the first, to the highly ecclesiastical character of French colonization in America, in which exploration and conversion ever proceeded hand in hand; the second, to the "mighty acts" and "glorious majesty" of the "grand Monarque." It is true that he had not, at this comparatively early epoch in his reign, put forth the exaggerated pretensions which he afterwards advanced; but the adulation and irreverence which offend us in the use made of these words, were already in the taste and fashion of that day.

Our second subject of remark is the crowned A (such we take it to be) which appears above the royal crown which forms the armorial crest. In

the absence of any authoritative information on the subject, we may reasonably conjecture that it signifies French (or Royal) America, and, if this be so, the only characteristic needed to make this coin pre-eminent in interest among all American colonial pieces, that, namely, of having on its face a distinct mention of our Continent, is supplied.

In concluding this paper, of which the subject, and the treatment of the subject, will, it is hoped, not be found beneath the notice of the American Philosophical Society, the writer may be permitted to observe that the fact of its being presented in this our year of Jubilee, and at the moment whence, a century ago, our first grand "annorum series" began to proceed, is entirely accidental, resulting from the casual acquisition, at this time, of the specimen which accompanies it. There seems, however, to be an eminent propriety in calling to mind, on the present most interesting occasion, and also connecting with tangible objects of curiosity, however slight, the American history of the great ally who rendered such essential aid to the insurgent colonies during their doubtful struggle. In regard to matters like this, perhaps not likely to be remembered with sufficient tenacity, medals and coins perform an important service; while, to take a broader view, through their distinct marking of decisive epochs, they contribute to enable us, in the words of a writer of the illustrious nation referred to, "*vivre de la grande vie des siècles*"—to live in the great life of the Centuries.

*On some Fundamental Propositions of Central Force.**

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All cyclical motions which are produced by the action of a central force are, necessarily, of an oscillatory character. They may, therefore, be mathematically represented by suitable modifications of simple pendulum equations, as Fourier has well shown.† The first attempt at a general discussion of such motions seems to have been made in 1827, by Dr. Henry James Anderson, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy in Columbia College, whose paper‡ may be found in the third volume of the second series of the

* Whenever I speak of "central force," in the present paper, I refer to force varying inversely as the square of the distance.

† See, also, papers by David Rittenhouse, *Trans. Soc. Phil. Am.*, iii; Jos. Clay *Ib.*, v; Owen Nulty (suggested by Rittenhouse's), *Ib.* [2] i; James Dean, and N. Bowditch, *Trans. A. A. S.*, iii; Robert Adrain, *Trans. S. P. A.*, [2] i; Eugenius Nulty, *Ib.* [2] ii.

‡ "On the motion of Solids on Surfaces, in the two Hypotheses of perfect Sliding and perfect Rolling, with a particular examination of their small Oscillatory Motions." *Op. cit.* p. 315.